set of apertures and lower set of apertures, and the right support rail is longitudinally symmetric with respect to its upper set of apertures and lower set of apertures.

32. (New) A support rail for a computer component rack mounting system, the support rail comprising:

an upper support rail portion containing an upper set of apertures for receiving fasteners to attach the upper support rail portion to an inner fixed slide rail of the computer component rack mounting system; and

a lower support rail portion containing a lower set of apertures for receiving fasteners to attach the lower support rail portion to an opposite inner fixed slide rail of the computer component rack mounting system, the lower set of apertures being longitudinally symmetric with respect to the upper set of apertures.

REMARKS

Unrelated to the prior art rejections or patentability, new claims 22-32 are submitted in place of previous claims 1-8, 10-18 and 20-21 to clarify the claimed subject matter based on a review by a new attorney involved in this case on behalf of Applicant. Claims 1-8, 10-18 and 20-21 were pending prior to this Amendment; new claims 22-32 are pending following entry of this Amendment. Previous claims 1 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Herrick, and previous claims 1-16 and 18-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over certain combinations of Hastings, Good, Herrick and Kofstad. New claims 22-32 are submitted to be allowable over the cited art (Hastings et al., Good et al., Herrick, Jones et al., and Kofstad). Withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of these new claims is respectfully requested.

Cited Art

Jones et al., Patent No. 2,346,167, is directed to a progressive suspension for drawers. The suspension includes a case or stationary guide rail A, a drawer rail B and a floating or extension rail C. The extension rail C is of less vertical depth than the case rail A, so it may fit within the case rail A (page 2, lines 21-23). Also the lower portion of the drawer rail B is of less width than its upper portion, so that the drawer rail B may be confined in the extension rail C (page 2, lines 33-38). In other words, the drawer and extension rails are designed to be mounted in the case rail.

Hastings, Patent No. 5,460,441, is directed to a rack-mounted computer system. Each server drawer structure 34 is supported by slide structure 52 for slideable movement relative to the cabinet (page 4, lines 30-36). Each slide structure 52 includes a horizontally disposed pair of support bracket portions 54 each secured at opposite ends thereof to support channel members 26 and 28 (Col. 4, lines 37-40). Each slide structure 52 further includes telescoping slide portions 56 each secured to one of the support bracket portions 54 (Col. 4 lines 39-42). The server drawer structure 34 includes an outer drawer 36 and an inner tray 38 as shown in Figure 4. Computer components requiring more frequent service access are stored in the inner tray 38, and the computer components requiring less frequent service access are stored in the outer drawer 36 beneath the inner tray 38 (Col. 6, lines 16-31).

Good et al., Patent No. 5,571,256, is directed to a server drawer structure for a rack mounted computer system. The server drawer structure 24 is slideably mounted on the cabinet frame structure by slide mount assemblies 42a and 42b (Col. 5, lines 1-7). Included in the server drawer structure 24 is a slide support bracket 52 sized to extend between a pair of support channels 14 and 16 on either side of the server drawer structure 24 (Col. 5, lines 14-16; Col. 6, lines 23-25). Front end tabs 60 on each slide support bracket 52 are received by channel openings 20 of the support channels 14 (Col. 6, lines 30-35). As a result, the front end walls 26 of each server drawer structure 24 are aligned with one another (Col. 6, lines 36-41).

Herrick, Patent No. 5,278,351, is directed to a personal computer cabinet cover. Reliance upon Herrick by the office action is moot in light of the new claims.

Kofstad, Patent No. 5,833,377, is directed to a self-retaining or compressible rack slide. A stated object of Kofstad is for a rack slide to automatically adjust its length to fit between uprights of a rack (Col. 1, line 66-Col. 2, line 2). In particular, a mounting assembly provides a biasing mechanism that lengthens the rack slide (Col. 3, lines 56-59). The mounting member is fastened to the rack slide 54 by receiving fasteners through slots 80a-d in the rack slide 54 (Col. 3, lines 34-55). While slots 80a-d are used to connect a mounting member to a rack slide, Applicants' set of apertures are for receiving fasteners to attach a support rail upper or lower portion to an inner fixed slide rail.

The cited art in combination fails to teach or suggest at least the following features of Applicants' claimed subject matter:

(i) ✓ an inner fixed slide rail positioned between front and back vertical rack members;

(ii) ✓ slide rails with a reduced height profile to accommodate an increased depth profile for a computer component enclosure;

(iii) ✓ an inner fixed slide rail disposed outwardly of an extension of the computer component enclosure;

(iv) ✓ front and back vertical rack members horizontally aligned with an inner fixed slide rail to conceal the width of the inner fixed slide rail; or

(v) a support rail with an upper support rail portion containing an upper set of apertures longitudinally symmetric with a lower set of apertures of a lower support rail portion.

Each of these features provides an independent basis for allowability of the claims over the cited art.

Applicants' Disclosure

In Applicants' Specification, Figure 9 provides a detailed sectional view of an exemplary computer component rack mounting system helpful for appreciating the nature of features (i)-(iv). As can be seen, inner slide rails 106 are positioned between front and back vertical rack members. In other words, front and back vertical rack members are horizontally aligned with inner slide rails 106 to conceal the width of the inner slide rails. Stated yet another way, the inner slide rails 106 are disposed outwardly of extensions 174 of the computer component enclosure 12. As a result, space within the computer component rack mounting system, which would otherwise be occupied by the inner slide rails 106, can be used to accommodate a wider computer component enclosure 12. Reference numeral 176 is illustrative of the additional width available for the computer component enclosure 12. One advantage of a wider computer component enclosure 12 is that more PC cards can be placed within the computer component enclosure 12.

As can also be seen, reducing the height profile 178 of the inner slide rails 106 creates space for a deeper computer component enclosure 12. Aside from improved space efficiency, one advantage of a deeper computer component enclosure 12 is that a side opening can be lower in the computer component enclosure 12 allowing for easier service access to PC cards

in the enclosure 12. The computer component 40 shown in Figure 2 within the computer component enclosure 12 helps to make this point.

Figure 4 of Applicants' Specification is helpful for understanding the nature of feature (v). The support rails 46 and 50 both include upper and lower support rail regions ("first and second mounting regions 70 and 72) that contain a set of apertures 76. As can be seen, the upper set of apertures on a support rail 46 or 50 is longitudinally symmetric with respect to the lower set of apertures on the support rail 46 or 50. Due to this design of the support rails 46 and 50, the support rails 46 and 50 are interchangeable. In this way, the number of different parts of a computer component rack mounting system are reduced.

Request for Telephonic Examiner Interview

Should the significant differences between the claimed subject matter and the cited art as identified above not yet be apparent to the Examiner, Applicants respectfully request a telephonic Examiner interview to discuss the case.

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that the foregoing amendments and remarks are fully responsive to the Office Action in that the rejections have been overcome and should be withdrawn. Reconsideration is respectfully requested. If there are any questions or comments, the Examiner is encouraged to contact George W. Jordan III at (713) 220-5800.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to the Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231 on 1/2, 2000.

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